

GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM RANKING CRITERIA WORKSHEET

Instructions for Header Information

The following data needs to be entered in the Ranking Sheet header:

Applicant name and landowner name (if applicant is not the owner).

Application Number - use the county code in conjunction with a sequential number (e.g. 53001-001)

Enter the county that contains the majority of the offered acres, and include a legal description.

Enter the acreage data requested.

Circle and enter the length of the rental agreement (10, 15, 20, or 30) or the length of the easement (30 or permanent).

Enter the estimated annual rental rate or estimated easement cost.

Definitions for Ranking Elements

Except for the Riparian bonus point in the Biodiversity - Vegetative Stands section, score only one element from each of the groups below.

Existing Grazing Operation

The land is part of an existing commercial livestock grazing operation. It must have been grazed in the current year at 30% or more of the carrying capacity unless it was being rested as part of a prescribed grazing plan.

Risk of Conversion from Grassland to Cropland or Non-Agricultural Use

Considerations:

	Point Weight	
* Land Capability Class I, II or III on majority of offered acres (Eastern WA)	50	_____
* Land Capability Class I, II or III on majority of offered acres (Western WA)	30	_____
* High potential for conversion to irrigated cropland (e.g. water availability, access)	10	_____
* Offered acres are adjacent to existing cropland	40	_____
* Offered acres not adjacent, but are within 1 mile of existing cropland	5	_____
* Offered acres are adjacent to housing or commercial development	10	_____
* Offered acres not adjacent, but within 1 mile of housing or commercial development	5	_____
* Evidence of ag conversion within the last 5 years on lands within 2 miles of the offer	20	_____
* Local infrastructure for marketing livestock or grassland products is limited	10	_____

Choose one from the list below, if applicable:

* Offered acres have been subdivided or platted for subdivision	30	_____
* Offered acres have been issued a permit for non-agricultural uses	20	_____
* Offered acres are not subject to local ordinances restricting conversion to non-ag uses	10	_____
* Offered acres have a high potential for conversion to ranchettes of < 40 acres in size	10	_____

Scoring: Add all points from the above considerations. Use the following point range to determine significance.

Significant 70 or > Moderate 50 to 69 Low < 49

Proximity to Other Protected Lands

Points are awarded based on proximity of the offered acres to other protected areas such as WRP easements, FRRP easements, WDFW or USFWS Wildlife Areas, DNR Natural Areas, or TNC land conservancy ownerships. There must be assurance that these areas would be protected for the life of the GRP agreement / easement. Do not consider CRP as an other protected lands.

Proximity to Critical Habitats

Points are awarded based on proximity to critical habitats as identified by WDFW on the Species of Concerns Maps used for CRP Sign-up 20 ranking.

Biodiversity - Vegetative Stands (based on the predominant acres of the offer)

Shrub-Steppe - Native: Award points if the majority of the offered acres are identified as Shrub-Steppe Habitat on the maps used for WHIP ranking, and the existing stand is composed mainly of native plants.

Eastside Grasslands - Native: Award points if the majority of the offered acres are identified as Eastside Grassland Habitat on the map used for WHIP ranking, and the existing stand is composed mainly of native plants.

Riparian - Award this point, in addition to the other vegetative stand points, if the offer contains a riparian area.

Native Prairie - Western WA: Award points if the majority of the offered acres are native prairie.

Oak Savanna - Western WA: Award points if the majority of the offered acres is Oak Savanna.

Grazed Forest - Award points if the majority of the offered acres is used as grazed forest.

Introduced species: Award points if a majority of the offered acres constitute introduced species.

Restoration Needed

Answer "Yes" if the offered acres require cost share to enhance or restore native grasses, forbs or shrubs. (Note - due to limited funding in FY2003, a lower priority is assigned to lands that require restoration)

O&M Requirements

High - Structural improvements, including fencing and water developments, are present on the offered acres and in the last third of their service life. Noxious weeds are present and are limiting the site potential (e.g. decline in productivity, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity.)

Medium- Structural improvements on the offered acres are in the middle third of their service life. Invasive species are present and limiting the site potential (e.g. decline in productivity, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity).

Low - No structural improvements, or those on the offered acres are within the first third of their service life.

Likelihood of Retention of Functions & Values After Agreement Ends

Items to consider include both the physical site conditions and the ownership pattern that may result in some form of increased protection such as a separate conservation easement or purchase agreement. (Note - assign as "High" for permanent easements)

Partnership Contributions

Included here are contributions that reduce USDA's cost, such as in-kind services or funding contributions.